

Dear MWCS-18 Families,

Please allow me to introduce myself; I'm Lieutenant Colonel Robert Coulombe, the new Commanding Officer of Marine Wing Communication Squadron 18. It seems like yesterday that we had our change of command and I greatly appreciate the warm welcome aboard greetings that I've received from many of you. As we continue through the summer time rotations, please permit me to introduce Captain Nate Brogdon, Commanding Officer, Alpha Company. Captain Brogdon and his family have transferred from 3rd Marine Division and III MEF. I would also like to welcome aboard Lieutenant Patrick Scott and his family. Lieutenant Scott and his family join us from 2d Marine Division. Lieutenant Scott is our new Supply Officer and assumed the additional responsibilities as the Headquarters and Service Company Commander. All of us will be working hard to support the families of MWCS-18.

Over the past 6-8 weeks, our Marines and families have completed a number of events. Firstly, the Marines have had the opportunity to train in the field by developing small unit leadership skills. They conducted land navigation, live firing of weapons, and rappelling. Additionally, they have participated in a number of Command Post exercises. Regardless of the complexity, I am absolutely impressed with the professionalism of our Marines and their desire to excel.

Family Readiness is an essential aspect of developing unit readiness and is one of my highest priorities. Since we cannot predict the future, we must be prepared for it by making a commitment to our Marines and their Families. Because our nation is involved in the Global War on Terrorism and we are located in an area of the world that has experienced its share of natural disasters, we have had Marines deployed to Iraq and Indonesia. For example, when the recent call for Marines occurred to support humanitarian operations in Indonesia, we responded quickly and with zeal. Almost instantly, the families of MWCS-18 provided much support and assistance. When the call for Marines has occurred, we have answered the call and so has our families. Immediately, the Families of MWCS-18 provided much support and assistance. Our Marines have since returned and Sergeant Krail, Corporal Norris and Corporal Contreras distinguished themselves and were each awarded the Navy and Marine Corps Achievement Medal. Corporal Byrd received a Meritorious Mast for his outstanding performance. Staff Sergeant Powell received a Joint Service Commendation Medal for his superb efforts in Iraq.

I am absolutely committed to our Marines and their Families because if the family is not ready, then neither is the Marine. Our Family Readiness Officer is Major Kevin Smith and Assistant Family Readiness Officer is Lieutenant John Fifield. Our Key Volunteer Coordinators are Mrs. Cindy Sanders and Mrs. Heather Pilgrim. Our goal is to provide our families with all the resources they need to be self-sufficient and informed during periods of our absence. We will help all our Marines achieve this goal through both the Key Volunteer Network and the Single Marine Program, two essential elements of Family Readiness.

As we continue through our busy summer, we have families completing their tours and others arriving to Okinawa weekly. If you are a veteran to Okinawa, I ask you to seek out new Families to offer any assistance. Soon our busy schedule will begin in full measure as we are called upon to support a number of exercises. As those days rapidly approach us, I ask that we assist one another.

One primary means of providing assistance and information exchange is via our Key Volunteer Network (KVN). Our Key Volunteer Network is all about "families helping families." Our primary purpose is to support a family when their Marines are deployed or whenever an unexpected situation emerges that requires assistance. Recently, we had such unexpected situations occur and our KVN provided very much appreciated assistance. Thanks Cindy, Heather, Michelle Cronbaugh, and Brigitte Powell!

Our KVN is sponsoring a Family Day that was rescheduled due to the recent typhoon. We are also looking ahead to the Birthday Ball and Holidays. In order to facilitate the efforts of the KVN, I have provided an office for their use. Included in this office (which is located directly across from mine) are computers, telephones and a plethora of office supplies. Again, I am committed to the KVN and the support it provides to our Families.

After you have checked in to the unit you will receive a call from the Key Volunteer assigned to your section. We are here to support you and will be a point of contact for assistance as you begin your Okinawa tour. If you would like more information about the Key Volunteer Network or becoming a unit Key Volunteer please contact one of our coordinators Cindy Sanders at 646-2525 or Heather Pilgrim at 646-5050.

I encourage all to participate in any capacity to the KVN. Your efforts are much appreciated and will contribute greatly to our MWCS-18 Marines and Families.

Welcome and Semper Fidelis,



Robert L. Coulombe